

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:GGAY:SM X20857

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFORM EPAP, KE

SUBJECT: NBC SPECIAL ON ELEPHANTS IN AFRICA

1. ON AUGUST 1 NBC BROADCAST 20 MINUTE SEGMENT ON BOOM-
ING IVORY TRADE IN AFRICA WHICH WAS PRODUCED IN KENYA
BY KAREN LERNER.

2. MARKET FOR IVORY AND FINISHED IVORY PRODUCTS DESCRIBED
AS SIMILAR TO MARKET FOR GOLD--IN PERIODS OF INSTABILITY
DEMAND FOR IVORY GOES UP AS HEDGE AGAINST INFLATION.
DEMAND HAS RECENTLY BEEN HIGH THUS ENCOURAGING POACHING
AND ILLEGAL TRADING.

3. MARKETING OF KENYAN IVORY DISCUSSED, INCLUDING SHOTS
OF COLLECTION STATION AND STORAGE VAULT IN MOMBASA.
MENTION MADE THAT SYSTEM RIGGED TO BE PROFITABLE TO
KENYAN POLITICIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. FOR EXAMPLE,
COMMENTATOR OF FILM MADE SUCH STATEMENTS AS "GOK OFFICIALS
BY RESTRICTING TRADE IN IVORY SEEMED TO HAVE FOUND WAY
TO TAKE IT OVER," AND "ALTHOUGH GOK SAYS THAT IT HAS
STOPPED ILLEGAL TRADE, ACTUALLY GOVT SEEMS TO HAVE
MONOPOLIZED IT AND KEPT PROFITS." HOWEVER NO NAMES NAMED

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NOR SPECIFICS MENTIONED.

4. COMMENT: AFTERNOON OF AUGUST FIRST AF/E DIRECTOR COOTE RECEIVED CALL FROM KENYAN COUNSELOR EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT BROADCAST WOULD LINK KENYATTA FAMILY WITH POACHING AND ILLEGAL IVORY TRADE. CHARGE ADDED THAT ANY UNFAVORABLE REFERENCE TO ANY MEMBER OF KENYATTA FAMILY IN NATIONWIDE VIEWING COULD HAVE UNFAVORABLE EFFECT ON U.S.-KENYAN RELATIONS. CHARGE WAS WELL AWARE THAT NBC IS STRICTLY PRIVATE ORGANIZATION OVER WHICH USG HAS NO CONTROL WHATSOEVER, BUT HE NEVERTHELESS ASKED THAT USG DO WHAT IT COULD TO ASSURE THAT NO PERSONAL REFERENCE WAS MADE TO KENYATTA FAMILY. WE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT PRODUCER KAREN LERNER HAD BEEN INTERVIEWED THAT MORNING ON "TODAY SHOW" AND IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION BY HOST HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SHE HAD HEARD RUMORS LINKING "MADAM KENYATTA" WITH THE IVORY TRADE. THIS POINT HOWEVER, WAS NOT MENTIONED IN NATIONALLY BROADCAST SPECIAL.

5. ON BALANCE WE FEEL KENYA WAS NOT TREATED TOO HARSHLY IN FILM, AND THERE SHOULD NOT BE STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION BY GOK. KISSINGER

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